

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W
----- 068417

R 120945Z MAR 74
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9918
INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 2762

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CH
SUBJECT: STRATEGY OF MAO, CHOU ET AL FOR ACHIEVING EGALITARIAN
SOCIALISM

SUMMARY: THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF LOOKING AT WHAT IS GOING ON
IN CHINA. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO ASK HOW IT ALL FITS INTO MAO'S
STRATEGY FOR MOVING THE PRC ALONG ON ITS ZIG-ZAG COURSE TOWARD
HIS EGALITARIAN SOCIALIST GOALS. HAVING CORRECTED COURSE TO THE
RIGHT FOLLOWING THE EXTREME LEFTWARD ZAG OF THE CULTURAL REVOLU-
TION, MAO SEEMS TO HAVE THE PRC ZIGGING TO THE LEFT AGAIN;
BUT I WOULD EXPECT THIS LEFTWARD MOVEMENT TO RUN ITS COURSE
SOON, AS IT WAS INITIATED BEFORE A DESTRUCTIVE HEAD OF STEAM HAD
BUILT UP BEHIND RADICAL DEMANDS. WHILE THERE ARE ASPECTS OF A
STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN WHAT IS GOING ON, AND THERE IS ALWAYS
SOME RISK OF THINGS GETTING OUT OF HAND, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT
CHOU EN-LAI IS IN THE INNER CIRCLE OF MAO-STRATEGISTS, AND SO
SHOULD BE IN LITTLE DANGER. WHETHER MAO'S STRATEGY ULTIMATELY
SUCCEEDS OR FAILS, I THINK, WILL DEPEND NOT ON WHAT INDIVIDUAL
TAKES HIS PLACE, BUT ON HOW DEEPLY MAO ET AL HAVE IMPLANTED A
LOYALTY TO THEIR STRATEGY AND GOALS AMONG THE CADRES AND THE
MASSES. TO KEEP HIS STRATEGY GOING, MAO WILL NEED A LITERAL
MULTITUDE OF SUCCESSORS. IF I HAD TO BET I WOULD BET THAT MAO'S
STRATEGY WILL NOT SURVIVE ITS CREATOR BY MANY YEARS; AND ONCE
MAOISM IS OUT OF THE WAY, MOMENTOUS CHANGES, SUCH AS THE
RESTORATION OF AT LEAST SUPERFICIAL HARMONY WITH THE USSR, WILL
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BECOME POSSIBLE. BUT THIS WILL BE OFFSET BY A TENDENCY ON THE
PART OF PEKING TOWARD MORE RATIONAL PRAGMATISM. IN ANY CASE,
SATISFACTORY US-PRC RELATIONS SHOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE DISTURBED.
END SUMMARY.

1. I AM EMBOLDENED BY THE SUBJECT OF A RECENT USLO CABLE ("CHOU, CHINA'S LEADING MAOIST") TO SUBMIT BELOW IN VERY SKETCHY OUTLINE MY OWN VALEDICTORY SPECULATION ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON IN CHINA AND THE OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE. THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF ORGANIZING AND TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OUT OF RECENT DATA. FOR EXAMPLE, ONE KEY DIMENSION OF ALMOST ANY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA, AS MAO NEARS HIS END, IS THE POWER-STRUGGLE DIMENSION. OR EVENTS CAN BE VIEWED IN THEIR POLICY DIMENSION, AS MANIFESTATIONS OF

DEBATES OVER FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES. WITHOUT IGNORING THE OTHER DIMENSIONS, I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO VIEW EVENTS ALSO, AS THE SUBJECT HEADING OF USLO'S CABLE SUGGESTS, AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF MAO'S LONG-RUN STRATEGY FOR MOVING CHINESE SOCIETY AHEAD TOWARD THE GOALS OF EGALITARIAN SOCIALISM. LOYALTY TO THIS CENTRAL STRATEGY SEEMS TO ME THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURE OF CHINA'S BRAND OF SOCIALISM. IF THE STRATEGY FAILS, OR IS ABANDONED BY MAO'S SUCCESSORS, THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRC'S ORIENTATION, ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR, EVEN FOR THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTER OF CHINESE SOCIETY, WILL BE EPOCHAL. ACCORDINGLY, WHILE EVENTS MAY HAVE OTHER DIMENSIONS, IF THEY CAN BE VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT OF MAO'S STRATEGY, I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO TRY TO DO SO.

2. IN HIGHLY OVER-SIMPLIFIED SYNOPSIS, WHAT I MEAN BY MAO'S STRATEGY IS AS FOLLOWS: MAO PERCEIVES CHINA'S COURSE TOWARD THE GOALS OF AN EGALITARIAN SOCIALIST SOCIETY AS NECESSARILY ZIG-ZAG IN SHAPE. THE REQUIREMENTS OF PROGRESS TOWARD EGALITARIAN GOALS DICTATE CERTAIN "LEFTIST" EMPHASSES WHICH, IF CARRIED TO THEIR LOGICAL EXTREMES, COULD IMPAIR THE BASIS FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND SOCIAL STABILITY, ULTIMATELY FRUSTRATING ALL GOALS, INCLUDING MAO'S OWN, SINCE EVEN HE, PRESUMABLY, DOES NOT WANT THE EMPTY EGALITARIANISM OF ABSOLUTE ENTROPY. ON THE OTHER HAND, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STABILITY, TOO LONG CONTINUED, INEVITABLY LEAD TO ELITISM, THE ACCUMULATION OF PRIVILEGE, CRYSTALLIZATION OF THE POWER STRUCTURE, AND OTHER "REVISIONIST" TENDENCIES. MAO'S SOLUTION IN THIS DILEMMA, AND MAYBE IT IS THE ONLY FEASIBLE

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ONE, IS TO TOLERATE OR ENCOURAGE PERIODIC SPASMS OF MOVEMENT TO THE "LEFT", DURING WHICH COMPLACENCY, ELITISM, AND OTHER SOURCES OF "REVISIONISM" WILL BE AT LEAST SHAKEN UP, IF NOT DESTROYED, THEN, HOPEFULLY BEFORE THE LEFTWARD SWING HAS REACHED REALLY DESTRUCTIVE EXTREMES, ENCOURAGE OR ALLOW THE COMPASS TO SWING BACK TO THE "RIGHT" SUFFICIENTLY TO RESTORE A DEGREE OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STABILITY, UNTIL IT IS TIME FOR ANOTHER ZIG TO THE LEFT.

3. APPLYING THIS CONCEPT TO RECENT PRC DEVELOPMENT, THE GPCR REFLECTED A VERY WILD LEFTWARD TACK ON CHINA'S COURSE, SO FAR TO THE LEFT AS TO ENDANGER NOGMAHCSABHE ORDINARY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GOALS OF THE SOCIETY, BUT MAO'S OWN GOALS. POST-GPCR

COURSE-CORRECTIONS BACK TWARD THE RIGHT TOOK PLACE IN MANY DIMENSIONS, INCLUDING THAT OF FOREIGN POLICY, AND THESE CONTINUED WELL INTO 1973. SOMETIME BEFORE THE TENTH PARTY CONGRESS THE PERCEPTION THAT THE TIDE MIGHT BE RUNNING TOO FAR TO THE RIGHT BEGAN TO BE SHARED BY MAO ET AL WITH INDIVIDUALS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE SOCIETY, THE TENTH PARTY CONGRESS THUS CAME ALONG AT A TIME WHEN MAO ET AL HAD PERCEIVED: (A) THAT THERE WAS SUFFICIENT GENUINE "STEAM" IN THE "LEFTIST" RESISTANCE TO THE VARIOUS ADJUSTMENTS AWAY FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE GPCR TO FUEL A MASS MOVEMENT OF CONSIDERABLE FORCE; AND (B) THAT IF THE "RIGHTWARD" ADJUSTMENTS AWAY FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE GPCR WERE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE UNCHECKED, THE "STEAM" BEHIND DEMANDS FOR LEFTWARD READJUSTMENTS WOULD BUILD UP TO AN EVEN MORE DESTRUCTIVE LEVEL. I THINK, THEREFORE, THAT THE DECISION TO ENCOURAGE A MOVEMENT OF THE KIND WE HAVE BEEN WITNESSING MAY HAVE SEEMED NECESSARY NOT ONLY TO SERVE THE PURPOSE OF MAO ET AL IN MOVING CHINA'S SOCIETY AHEAD, BUT ALSO, PARADOXICALLY, AS A WAY OF MINIMIZING THE RISK OF REALLY DESTRUCTIVE LEFTIST EXCESSES.

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W
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R 120945Z MAR 74
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9919
INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
USLO PEKING

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4. WHILE THE METAPHOR OF "ONE TENDENCY COVERING ANOTHER" WAS USED AT THE TENTH PARTY CONGRESS IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT, THAT METAPHOR, ALONG WITH THE EMPHASIS ON "GOING AGAINST THE TIDE", MAY ALSO BE PERTINENT TO THE PROCESS JUST SKETCHED OUT. BOTH METAPHORS SUGGEST A CYBERNETIC VIEW; A "TENDENCY" TO THE RIGHT CORRECTS A TENDENCY TO THE LEFT, AND AS THE TIDE RUNS TO THE RIGHT, A POINT WILL BE REACHED WHEN THE CADRES AND INDEED THE MASSES THEMSELVES PERCEIVE THAT THE TIDE HAS GONE TOO FAR; IF THEY THEN IN INCREASING NUMBERS BEGIN TO BUCK THE TIDE, THE COURSE OF SOCIETY WILL BE BROUGHT BACK TO THE LEFT ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY. THEN, WHEN THAT TIDE IS IN DANGER OF GOING TOO FAR TO THE LEFT, THE EFFECT OF INCREASING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE BEGINNING TO BUCK THE TIDE WILL BE TO EXECUTE ANOTHER

COURSE CORRECTION, THIS TIME TOWARD THE RIGHT. OBVIOUSLY, THE SOONER

THE CADRES AND MASSES PERCEIVE WHEN THE TIDE HAS GONE TOO FAR,
AND THE MORE COURAGEOUS THEY ARE ABOUT BUCKING THE TIDE, THE CLOSER
THE RESULTANT FORWARD MOTION OF CHINESE SOCIETY WILL APPROXIMATE TO
A STRAIGHT LINE.

5. THE "CYBERNETIC" INTERPRETATION, IF IT WAS ACTUALLY IMPLIED OR
INTENDED AS SUCH BY THE AUTHORS OF THE TENTH PARTY CONGRESS
DOCUMENTS, HAS IMPLICATIONS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, FOR THE
SUCCESSION PROBLEM. THE IMPLICATION WOULD BE THAT MAO AND THOSE
WHO SHARE HIS STRATEGIC VISION HOPE ULTIMATELY TO BE ABLE TO
COUNT ON THE RANK AND FILE OF THE PARTY, AND INDEED ON THE
MASSES, TO PROVIDE BOTH THE MOTIVE POWER AND THE GENERAL GUIDANCE
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FOR THIS ZIG-ZAG PROGRESS OF CHINESE SOCIETY TOWARD THE EGALITARIAN
UTOPIA; MAO ET AL, THAT IS TO SAY, MAY NOT SEE THEMSELVES AS
ENTIRELY DEPENDENT UPON HANDING THE BATON OF LEADERSHIP ON TO
SOME ONE HAND-PICKED INDIVIDUAL. THEY MIGHT INDEED SEE A MULTITUDE
OF "SUCCESSORS."

6. AS TO THE MORE IMMEDIATE POWER IMPLICATIONS OF THE ANALYSIS
SUGGESTED HERE, I WOULD ASSUME THAT CHOU EN-LAI HAS LONG SINCE
SUCCEEDED IN IDENTIFYING HIMSELF, AT LEAST IN MAO'S EYES, WITH
THE INNER DIRECTORATE OF PERSONS WHO, SHARING MAO'S VISION, CAN
BE TRUSTED TO WORK CONSCIENTIOUSLY TO MOVE CHINESE SOCIETY ALONG
TOWARD MAO'S GOALS. CHOU'S SUCCESS IN PUTTING HIMSELF ABOVE
THE FRAY IN THE "UMPIRES' GROUP HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT OBSCURED
BY HIS CONCURRENT ROLE AS CHINA'S MOST CAPABLE ADMINISTRATOR.
AS SUCH, CHOU HIMSELF NECESSARILY RISKS BECOMING A TARGET OF
ABUSE DIRECTED AT POLICIES HE HAS FORMULATED AND IMPLEMENTED
DURING PERIODS OF RIGHTWARD ADJUSTMENT. HOWEVER, AS CHOU'S
REPORT TO THE TENTH CONGRESS ILLUSTRATES, HE IS CAPABLE OF
"DECOPLING" HIMSELF FROM TROUBLESOME (I.E., RIGHTWARD) ASPECTS
OF "HIS" POLICIES AT LEAST SUFFICIENTLY TO PERMIT HIM TO RIDE OUT
PERIODS OF LEFTWARD READJUSTMENT. I DO NOT KNOW WHO ELSE IN THE
INNER CIRCLE SHARE MAO'S VISION AND WORK WITH HIM AS CHOU DOES,
THOUGH, AT A HUNCH, I WOULD GUESS THAT CHANG CH'UN-CH'AO HAS
THE REQUIRED POLITICAL SAVVY COMBINED WITH THE ABILITY TO AVOID
OVER-IDENTIFICATION WITH EXTREME POSITIONS.

7. IN THE LONGER RUN, I THINK THE FATE OF MAO'S STRATEGY WILL BE
DETERMINED, NOT BY THE COMMITMENT OF CHOU, OR CHANG, OR WANG
HUNG-WEN, OR OTHER INDIVIDUALS NOW VISIBLE, BUT BY HOW WELL
MAO ET AL HAVE SUCCEEDED IN IMPLANTING THEIR STRATEGY FOR
EGALITARIANISM AMONG THE "MASSES." IT MAY WELL TURN OUT, ONCE
MAO IS RONE, THAT NO ONE WILL OFFER MORE THAN LIP SERVICE TO
MAO'S VISION AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CPCR. ON THE OTHER HAND,
IT IS MY OWN IMPRESSION, ON THE BASIS OF THE NARROWEST KIND OF
DIRECT OBSERVATION, THAT MAO'S RADICAL PROGRAM HAS A POPULAR APPEAL
WHICH MAY CONCEIVABLY ENABLE IT OT SURVIVE MAO AS AN EFFECTIVE
FORCE IN PRC POLITICS. IF SO HOW A MAN IS THOUGHT TO STAND IN
REGARD TO THE ISSUE OF LOYALTY TO THE PRINCIPLES AND GOALS OF MAO

AND THE GPCR COULD BE AN ELEMENT IN HIS POLITICAL STRENGTH EVEN
AFTER MAO IS DEAD.

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8. NEVERTHELESS, VIEWING THE PROSPECTS FROM THIS POINT IN TIME,
ONE WOULD HAVE TO RATE THE PROBABILITY OF THE SURVIVAL OF
MAO'S PROGRAM FOR MORE THAN A FEW YEARS AFTER MAO'S DEATH AS
SOMEWHAT LESS THAN FIFTY-FIFTY. ("MAOISM" MIGHT, OF COURSE,
SURVIVE AS AN UNDERGROUND REVOLUTIONARY FORCE, INSIDE OR OUTSIDE

OF CHINA.) IN MY OPINION, IF THE PRC WERE TO DISAVOW MAO'S
STRATEGY AND GOALS, THE MAJOR OBSTACLE STANDING IN THE WAY OF
RAPPROACHEMENT WITH THE USSR WOULD HAVE BEEN REMOVED (THOUGH
IRRITANTS APLENTY WOULD REMAIN). AT THE SAME TIME, THE CHANGE
WOULD ALSO POSSIBLY REMOVE ONE OF THE MAJOR SOURCES OF
"IRRATIONALITY" IN PRC DECISION-MAKING, AND PERHAPS ENCOURAGE
THE PRC TO CONCENTRATE ITS ENERGIES ON MORE PRAGMATIC GOALS.
WHILE I ADMIT TO SOME UNEASINESS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS
OF SINO-SOVIET COOPERATION, I BELIEVE THAT SINO-AMERICAN SUCCESS
IN KEEPING THE TAIWAN QUESTION ON THE WAY TOWARD ULTIMATE PEACEFUL
RESOLUTION, AND OPENING UP THE POSSIBILITY OF MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL
TRADE AND OTHER INTERACTIONS, WILL BE ENOUGH TO KEEP OUR BILATERAL
RELATIONS SATISFACTORY EVEN IF A DEGREE OF SINO-SOVIET HARMONY
SHOULD BE USHERED IN BY THE FADING OF MAO'S VISION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 27 JUL 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, SOCIALISM, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974HONGK02762
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P740141-0736
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740382/abbrzatk.tel
Line Count: 247
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUL 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <27 JAN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STRATEGY OF MAO, CHOU ET AL FOR ACHIEVING EGALITARIAN SOCIALISM
TAGS: PINT, CH, (MAO TSE-TUNG)
To: STATE INFO TAIPEI
PEKING
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005